

English Heritage Battlefield Report: Worcester 1651

The Battlefield of Worcester (3 September 1651) with Powick Bridge 1642

Parish: Worcester, St Peter the Great County, Whittington, Powick

District: Worcester, Wychavon, Malvern Hills

County: Worcestershire

Grid ref: SO 850526

Historical Context

The execution of Charles I on 30 January 1649 left his son, Prince Charles, determined to claim his crown and his inheritance by force. The Scots, at least, were willing to accept Charles as Charles II, providing he would agree to impose the Solemn League and Covenant throughout his recovered lands. On 23 June 1650 Charles took the Covenant and the Scots increased their preparations for war with England. While David Leslie set about raising an army for Charles, Parliament decided to pre-empt a Scots invasion by launching its own attack across the border.

On 19 July 1650 Cromwell was at Berwick with 5,000 Horse and 10,000 Foot and ten days later he made contact with a Scottish army numbering over 20,000 men deployed in a strong position between Edinburgh and Leith. Cromwell, with nearly 5,000 of his troops incapacitated by sickness, fell back to Dunbar closely followed by Leslie's army. He was now faced with the stark choice of fighting his way out of the Scottish encirclement or requesting the navy to evacuate his regiments by sea. Cromwell chose to attack and on 4 September 1650 his troops destroyed the Scots army at Dunbar.

Cromwell pursued Leslie's surviving troops to Stirling but the Parliamentarians were not strong enough to risk an assault on the town's fortifications. Cromwell withdrew to Edinburgh and stalemate ensued with neither army anxious to risk a general engagement in their weakened condition. By the end of June 1651 both armies were again ready for battle but hard as Cromwell manoeuvred he could not draw Leslie into the open. By 26 July, however, the Parliamentarians had managed to cut the Scots lines of communication from Stirling, and Leslie's military options were reduced to two - accept battle in Scotland or march south into England. Charles chose the latter course and on 6 August 1651 some 12,000 men of the Scots army crossed the border, advancing on London by the western route. As he marched through Cumberland and Lancashire Charles hoped that his army would be swelled by thousands of loyal supporters eager to do battle on behalf of the Crown. Instead many of the Scots who straggled behind the army were swept up by Major General Lambert's cavalry and few recruits came forward to replace them.

Despite being pressed closely by Parliamentary Horse and Militia the Royalist advance was rapid and by 22 August they had reached Worcester. Their progress south (some 300 miles in under three weeks) had taken its toll and the army was in dire need of rest. Charles decided to remain in Worcester in an attempt to enable his troops to recover their morale and strength while reinforcements were gathered in. As one Parliamentary officer recorded:

The Scotch had left a party in Worcester, and had transported their army over Severn, intending to secure the passes, and invite their friends to them and refresh all their wearied army. That their army is 12,000 horse and foot effective, and the foot so much harassed by often and frequent marches, that they did importune the King to take pity on them, who answered that they should suddenly have refreshment, gave them good words, and told them what help he

expected from his friends.¹

Parliament, spurred on by the potential threat to London, had ordered a concentration of troops and militia at Coventry, and Cromwell, who was already moving south at speed, was informed that Charles appeared to be making for Worcester. By 27 August Cromwell was at Evesham with General Charles Fleetwood. Together they mustered some 28,000 troops and militia. Determined to preserve his freedom of movement on both sides of the Severn, Cromwell dispatched Lambert to seize the bridge at Upton. A Royalist force under Major General Edward Massey had already broken down the bridge, but Lambert still managed to get troops across the surviving structure and drive the Royalists off with loss. Massey was wounded in this encounter and was able to take little part in the subsequent events of the campaign. The absence of such an able officer from both the King's Council of War and the fighting was greatly felt by the Royalists. With Lambert's success, however, Cromwell was able to implement his plans for cutting the King's communications with Wales and proceed with the assault upon Worcester.

Location and Description of the Battlefield

The battle was fought in and around Worcester itself, with the fighting centred within an area roughly bounded in the south by the River Teme between Powick Bridge and the confluence of the Teme and Severn; in the west by St. John's and Wick Fields; in the north by Pitchcroft; and in the east by Perry Wood, Red Hill, and the banks of the Severn.

The King hoped to maintain and refresh his army in Worcester while recruits were raised in Wales and the West Country and his outlook before the battle was thus primarily defensive. In remaining in and close to Worcester, Charles was using the Teme and the Severn as natural obstacles, limiting, he hoped, Cromwell's freedom of manoeuvre. To reinforce his position Charles sent troops to break down the bridges across the Severn at Upton (the only crossing between Worcester and Gloucester) and Bewdley, and across the Teme at Powick and Bransford.

There is no controversy relating to the course or main site of the fighting. With much of the battlefield now built-over the only areas where it is at all profitable to seek locations for particular actions is in the south towards Powick and the confluence of the rivers, and around Fort Royal in the east. The fighting at Powick, which effectively opened the battle between 1.00 and 2.00pm, centred on a brief engagement in Powick Churchyard and subsequently around the remains of the bridge itself and across 'Wick fields'. The heaviest fighting of the day took place on the ground between the Parliamentary positions before Perry Wood and the east and north walls of the City.

The Landscape Evolution

In 1651 Worcester was a fortified, walled town with access via seven gates. The fortifications were not in a good state of repair but the gates, although largely rotten, were closed every night. A ditch gave some protection to the walls for part of their course but it did not extend around the entire circumference of the City. In a contemporary plan² of the City dating from 1651 a number of supporting redoubts, bastions and curtain walls are shown around the gates, projecting from the main wall, and linking Fort Royal to the southern defences. Some of these features may spring from the imagination of the cartographer but we know that the Royalists began to repair and extend the City's fortifications shortly after their arrival at Worcester. Instructions were sent to outlying parishes to provide labour for this work:

You are hereby required to send out of your parish 30 able men to work at the fortifications of this city, and in regard of the necessity to begin to-morrow morning (Monday 25th August 1651) at five o'clock....and you are to bring with you spades, shovels, and pick axes.³

That this command was effective can be seen from an entry in the diary of Nicholas Lechmere who wrote that the King 'in a few days fortified it (Worcester) beyond imagination'. Earthworks were constructed outside the walls and the city gates were either strengthened or blocked completely (Foregate in the north for example), but the most extensive fortification took place across the London road on the south side of Worcester.

The key position in these defences was an entrenched earthwork known as Fort Royal with sides stretching for 200 feet and bastioned angles. The fort, which may have been based on an earlier medieval structure, stood on a hill about 300 yards outside the Sidbury Gate. It was connected to the main walls by earth ramparts which extended across the south of the City, though there is doubt as to whether these works or the fort itself were properly finished before the battle. Although John Lord Byron writing from Paris on 9 September 1651 asserted that the King had entered England with 'a good train of artillery', it is not known how the guns were deployed at Worcester nor how many there might have been in Fort Royal. Whatever its final strength the fort suffered from the weakness of being overlooked by Perry Wood and Red Hill and any counter-battery that might be placed there.

The City of Worcester has subsumed the greater part of the battlefield, but open ground still exists to the south where the fighting along the banks of the Rivers Teme and Severn developed and spread north towards the city walls. Indeed the flat meadows, divided by hedgerows, which stretch between Powick Bridge and the west bank of the Severn still contain something of the original character of the southern sector of the battlefield. With the exception of its woods, seventeenth-century Worcestershire was predominantly a county of large arable fields and open meadows with very little enclosure.

A few of the structures and buildings that were witness to the battle still stand, notably the Cathedral, Powick Church and Bridge, and the Commandery. The Commandery, located outside the walls but within the Royalist lines, was the King's Headquarters and also served as an 'aid-post' for the wounded. Although it has been greatly altered over the years, the Commandery now functions as a Civil War Interpretative Centre and Museum. Less complete but almost as evocative are the remains of Fort Royal, a scheduled ancient monument lying partly in a public park and partly on private ground. The Fort has suffered considerable injury over the years but the general outline of the earthwork together with evidence of the lines which connected it to the town walls are still visible.

The Battle: its sources and interpretation

Given the significance of Worcester as the final battle of the Civil Wars it is surprising that there are comparatively few contemporary sources available. This is perhaps partly due to the fact that Charles' army was composed in the main of Scotsmen who, after the battle, would have little interest in perpetuating the details of so inglorious an episode, even if they escaped the captivity that befell so many. There must also have been a feeling on the Parliamentary side that Worcester was business well finished and that there were now other pressing affairs on which to concentrate. Even so, there are accounts of the battle both by participants and eyewitnesses including despatches from Cromwell and Sir Robert Stapleton.

Although Charles' army may have increased to as much as 16,000 men immediately before the battle, it was beset by low morale and jealous officers. David Leslie who looked 'sad and melancholic' throughout the venture, told Charles that he knew that the army 'how well soever it looked, would not fight'. There were also too few troops for the task ahead and the employment of what strength the Royalists had was bedevilled by a quarrel between Leslie and Lieutenant General John Middleton. The consequence of this rivalry was to be seen in the irresolution of Leslie's cavalry during the coming battle. Faced with stark reality Charles abandoned all hope of marching on London and proceeded to make his position at Worcester as secure as possible.

To defend Worcester the Royalist army was divided into two main groups, with the largest force deployed in the City itself and in the recently thrown-up fortifications, and a smaller force, under Major-General Robert Montgomery, holding the ground on the Royalist's right flank between the Severn and the Teme. The Royalist Horse was drawn up to the north-west on Pitchcroft meadow. With the exception of the troops garrisoning the City and the fortifications, Charles abandoned the east bank of the Severn to the Parliamentarians. This suited Cromwell in part, but he also wanted freedom of movement on the west bank in order that he could be certain that the Royalists would not escape or be reinforced before battle was joined.

Cromwell's broad plan was to bombard the Royalist fortifications from the east, holding their main strength in the centre and left of their position, while General Fleetwood advanced from the west and south against the Royalist's right flank. By attacking this flank Cromwell was executing a turning movement which, if successful, would ultimately take the newly constructed fortifications from the rear and shut the Royalists in Worcester. They could then be starved into submission or forced to fight their way out of encirclement against a numerically superior army. The proximity of the rivers, however, together with the lack of usable bridges, gave Charles' position considerable strength, and Fleetwood would be isolated from the Parliamentary main body for much of his advance. If Cromwell's twin attacks were to be capable of mutual support he had to resolve the tactical problem posed by the Teme and Severn.

The solution which was adopted at a Parliamentary council of war held on 31 August was to bridge both rivers in the face of the enemy. The expedient of fighting on the east and west banks of the Severn had obviously been widely considered for the Council of State wrote to General Blake that:

The Lord General is before the town east of the Severn, and Fleetwood west. There is a bridge of boats preparing above the confluence of the Teme and Severn. When ready this will be a line of communication between the two armies, and we shall speedily force them to fight, or starve, or run if they can break through; the latter will be most likely.⁴

Cromwell went further than a single bridge across the Severn for his troops also assembled a bridge of boats⁵ to link the south and north banks of the Teme.

In the morning, 3rd September, Lieut-General Fleetwood had orders to advance with his brigade on the other side Severn, and all things being prepared for the making of a bridge, and having cleared our passage with a forlorn we laid a bridge over Severn and another over Teme.⁶

Although it is difficult to pinpoint the precise location of these bridges it is clear that to an extent they were mutually supporting, and that the bridge across the Severn was constructed just above the river's confluence with the Teme. The Council of State's location of the site of the bridge is supported by Nicholas Lechmere:

The morning the battle was fought the General made a bridge over the river of Severn, a little above Teme's mouth...⁷

Fleetwood's deployment south of the Teme stretched from Powick to the west bank of the Severn, and it was his right wing which crossed the second bridge. It is probable therefore that this bridge was close to that across the Severn. In order to facilitate the construction of the bridges, Cromwell extended his line southwards from the initial deployment at Red Hill and Perry Wood to Bund's Hill. The Parliamentarians put a forlorn hope across the Severn to form a bridgehead, and the Scots seem to have been powerless to prevent the completion of the crossing points.

Cromwell, anxious perhaps that the auguries for the battle should be as favourable as possible, set the start of the Parliamentary attack for the anniversary of his victory at Dunbar (3 September 1650), and ordered his troops to adopt the same field sign:

This has been a glorious day. This day twelve months was glorious at Dunbar. This day hath been glorious before Worcester. The word was then the Lord of Hosts, and so it was now, and indeed the Lord of Hosts was wonderfully with us. The same signal we had then as now, which was to have no white about us and indeed the Lord hath clothed us with white garments, though to the enemy they have been bloody.⁸

Fleetwood had some 12,000 men deployed south of the Teme, and while his left under Major-General Richard Deane attempted to push across the river at Powick, his right under John Lambert would cross by the bridge of boats. While this attack was in progress Cromwell intended to hold the attention of the Royalists in Worcester itself by firing the guns on Red Hill and Perry Wood into the City and the earthworks. Powick was held for the King by Keith's brigade while Piscotty's Highlanders were deployed along the hedgerows behind the Teme and on the ground adjacent to the bridges of boats. A reserve brigade stationed in 'Wick Field' and across the rising ground towards Worcester was commanded by Dalziel. The largest force of Scots, around Fort Royal, was led by the Duke of Hamilton with a detachment under Lord Rothes holding the Castle Mound. The role of the Scottish Horse under Leslie was to support either the troops along the Teme or in the centre as required.

The Battle proper began on the west bank of the Severn:

The fight began on the other side Severn, and our foot from this side began it, they clearing the way for the rest to come over after them. The right wing of Lieut-General Fleetwood's force came over the bridge of Teme, while the left wing disputed the bridge at Powick, which dispute lasted a long time and was very hot. But the Lord gave our men to gain ground of the enemy till we had beaten them out of the ground. While this was doing the enemy rallying made a very bold sally out on this side of the town, and came with great bodies of horse and foot. Supposing most of our army had been drawn out on the other side they gave our men a very hot salute and put them to a little retreat and disorder. But in a short while the Lord gave us victory on this side also, our foot did very noble and gallant service, and they disputed with them, not only the hedges but followed them boldly to the very mouth of the cannon, which was planted on the mountain works.⁹

At Powick the Scots fell back slowly, fighting fiercely for the Churchyard and then repeatedly throwing back Deane's attacks upon the bridge. Although Lambert's troops crossed the bridge over the Teme they could make little headway against Piscotty's men firing from behind the hedges. The Parliamentary attack on the Royalist right wing had stalled and, in an attempt to regain some momentum, Cromwell led three brigades across the bridge over the Severn to Lambert's aid. With fresh troops on their flank and Lambert still attacking in front the Scots were eventually forced to give ground, and, as they fell back towards Worcester, Keith's men fighting at Powick Bridge were isolated. Deane renewed his assault on the bridge and the defenders were at last forced back, their retirement taking them into the path of Piscotty's withdrawal. Confusion grew in the ranks of the Scots and gradually retreat turned into rout with the survivors fleeing pell-mell into the City.

Cromwell's movement of troops to support Lambert had weakened the Parliamentary centre and Charles decided to exploit this opportunity in the hope of relieving the pressure on his right flank. Although Leslie's Horse would not participate in the attack, the King led all the Foot and Horse he could rally out of the Sidbury Gate, along the London road, and against the Parliamentary position on Red Hill. At the same time the Duke of Hamilton attacked the enemy at Perry Wood:

His Majesty behaved himself very gallantly; with his own regiment of horse, and Hamilton's, he broke a regiment of foot, and forced back a considerable body of their horse but at last was overpowered, and our horse ran, though the King strove to make them stand. The King being closely pursued, and our men stopping the passage, was forced to quit his horse, and climb up our half raised mount, and there so encouraged our foot that the enemy retired with loss.¹⁰

At first the Royalist attack, which fell mostly upon the Parliamentary militia, met with considerable success, forcing a general retreat of the Parliamentary line. At this moment of crisis Cromwell led the three brigades he had taken to Lambert's support back across the bridge of boats and ordered his centre to recover the ground that had been lost. As the Parliamentary strength increased the Scots began to waver and fall back. Cromwell, seizing the opportunity, led a general advance which pushed the Scots down the hill towards the Sidbury Gate:

At length we gained their works and planted their guns against them in the town, and we hear that some of our horse and foot are in the north and east end of the town. The night came on so fast that we could not pursue further.¹¹

The momentum of their advance carried the Parliamentarians into the Royalist fortifications and the Essex Militia captured Fort Royal. Overwhelmed by superior numbers, and with the Duke of Hamilton mortally wounded, the Royalist retreat became increasingly disorganised and Charles drew his remaining strength back within the City walls:

The King perceiving the enemy too numerous, and our men worsted, drew them within the walls, where it was long disputed, and then taking a fresh horse, he rode to the cavalry, with the intention of rallying them, and scouring the foot from the walls; but it was in vain....David Leslie rode up and down as one amazed, or seeking to fly, for they were so confused that neither threats nor entreaty could persuade them to charge with His Majesty.¹²

Having pushed the Scots through Wick and St. John's, Fleetwood's troops were pouring into Worcester along Broad Street. Their appearance ended the little military cohesion that remained in the Royalist ranks and the Scots turned their thoughts to flight:

Towards the evening all things appeared very horrid, alarms being in every part of the city, and a report that the enemy had one end of the town, and we of the horse trampling one upon another, much readier to cut each other's throat than to defend ourselves against the enemy.¹³

Fighting continued in the streets and at the Castle Mound until after dark but the issue was never in doubt. With only St. Martin's Gate now available as an escape route even flight proved difficult:

I heard they had not many more than 1000 horse in their body that fled, and I believe we have near 4000 forces following and interposing between them and home.¹⁴

The Parliamentary pursuit harried the fugitives mercilessly:

We had no guide so we often lost our way, but yet reached Newport, 30 miles this side of Worcester, the next morning, and there thought to have refreshed ourselves, and marched quietly for Scotland; but our enemies' posts flew faster than we, and there wanted not considerable forces in every place to front us, and we were so closely pursued, in the day by the army and garrison forces, and in the night by the country, that from the time we came out of Worcester until the Friday evening that I was taken prisoner seven miles from Preston, neither I nor my horse ever rested. Our body consisted of 3,000; in the day we often faced the enemy and beat their little parties, but still those of us whose horses tired or were shot were lost, unless they could run as fast as we rode....On Thursday night Lieut-Generals Middleton and Leslie left us, or willingly lost us, but with all the haste they made, both of them, with Sir Wm Fleming, are here prisoners.¹⁵

In the immediate aftermath of the battle the scale of the Scot's casualties and the devastation that had been inflicted on Worcester shocked observers:

I thank you for sending to inquire as to our condition at this place, which has been of late very troublesome and hazardous. The storm as fallen very heavily on the town of Worcester and 4 or 5 miles around, to the ruin of very many families. You cannot hear too bad an account of the inhabitants of Worcester, all houses being ransacked from top to bottom, the very persons of men and women not excepted....The number of the slain is certainly great. On Thursday morning the dead bodies lay in the way from Powick bridge to the town, and on the ground on either side of it, and almost every street of the town. Many lie killed in the houses, in the College and Church, on the Green, and in the cloisters and quite through Sidbury and about a mile that way.¹⁶

The exact number of casualties on both sides was harder to estimate but it was clear that the Royalist army had virtually ceased to exist:

What the slain are I can give you no account, because we have not taken an exact view, but they are very many, and must needs be so, because the dispute was long and very near at hand, and often at push of pike, and from one defence to another. There are about 6 or 7,000 prisoners taken here, and many officers and noblemen of quality, Duke Hamilton, the Earl of Rothes, and divers other noblemen ; I hear the Earl of Lauderdale, many officers of great quality, and some that will be fit subjects of your justice.¹⁷

Notwithstanding the disparity in numbers Worcester had been a close fought struggle for several hours:

This battle was fought with various success for some hours, but still hopeful on your part, and in the end became an absolute victory, and so full an one as proved a total defeat and ruin of the enemies' heels and fighting with them in the streets with very great courage, took all their baggage and artillery.¹⁸

Cromwell's troops had fought well, including the militia, and though the Scots probably lost some 3,000 killed, he believed that the Parliamentary casualties had been relatively few:

Indeed, it was a stiff business, yet I do not think we have lost 200 men. Your new-raised forces did perform singular good service, for which they deserve a very high estimation and acknowledgement, as also for their willingness thereunto. For as much as the same has added so much to the reputation of your affairs, they are all despatched home again, which I hope will be much to these and satisfaction of the Country, which is a great fruit of the successes.¹⁹

The source of the King's failure was seen by contemporaries to stem from a lack of soldierly qualities and commitment in the Scots, and particularly in the Horse, though it was also acknowledged that the Royalists had fallen to superior numbers:

That the business succeeded so ill on the King of Scots' side is much attributed to the cowardice of the Scottish horse, who hardly stood one charge, and to the unreadiness of their army in general. The officers, not attending their duty, could not be found to bring up their men and to send relief where it was necessary. The Parliamentary army plied their business with reserve upon reserve until they had routed all the Scottish forces on both sides of the river and driven them into the town, and then fell to storming without any reserve.²⁰

Indication of Importance

The first and last engagements of the English Civil Wars were fought at Worcester (see Appendix 1 for the

1642 engagement at Powick Bridge). In the intervening years the County saw as much action and movement of men and munitions as any region in England. As a source of supply and as a centre of communications Worcestershire was vital to the Royalist cause and its towns and villages became familiar sites to the both the King's and Parliament's armies.

Although Charles escaped to France, his defeat at Worcester ended any immediate hope of restoring the monarchy. The Royalists in both England and Scotland no longer possessed the military resources needed to face the 50,000 troops of the New Model Army. The Nation was to be governed until the Restoration in 1660, *de facto*, by the army led by Oliver Cromwell.

Militarily, Worcester is noteworthy for the completeness of Cromwell's victory and also for his tactic of bridging the Teme and Severn. Instances of river crossings via specially constructed bridges of boats were comparatively rare during the Civil Wars, but to undertake that crossing in the face of the enemy was unusual indeed. Moreover, in using this tactic Cromwell had effectively divided his army save for a line of communication dependent upon a single bridge across a broad river. This deployment led to difficulties, and gave the King his only real chance of defeating the Parliamentarians, but Cromwell's generalship proved equal to the crisis when it came.

Worcester produces no insoluble problems for the historian, although it would be of great interest to know more detail of Cromwell's bridging operations. The contemporary accounts of the battle provide a clear and uncontentious account of the fighting.

Battlefield Area

The battlefield area boundary defines the outer reasonable limit of the battle, taking into account the positions of the combatants at the outset of fighting and the focal area of the battle itself. It does not include areas over which fighting took place subsequent to the main battle. Wherever possible, the boundary has been drawn so that it is easily appreciated on the ground.

The battlefield has necessarily been severely affected by the spread of Worcester itself and this process is continuing through the construction of a new By-Pass south of the Teme. The fighting within and close to the City walls can be located at individual points such as the Commandery, Fort Royal and Perry Wood. In addition the site of the early skirmishing between the troops of Fleetwood and Keith can be seen in Powick, where the splashes of musket balls can still be traced on the walls of the Church.

The only remaining open space within the greater battlefield is to be found on either side of the Teme between Powick Bridge and the confluence with the Severn and eastward to the railway line. Here, and particularly along the river banks, the sense of the ground over which the desperate fighting on the Royalist right flank ebbed and flowed can be appreciated.

The Registered battlefield boundary therefore skirts the existing intensive development with the railway on the east side, the new road on the south side, Powick Bridge to the west and the water treatment works and lock on the north side.

Notes

1. General Charles Fleetwood in a letter to Parliament. Quoted in Bund, J W Willis The Civil War in Worcestershire 1642-1646; and the Scotch Invasion of 1651. (Birmingham and London 1905) p228
 2. Available in reproduction from the Commandery, now a Civil War Interpretative Centre, in Worcester. The reproduction does not identify the author of the map. The same map is reproduced in Bund, J W Willis The Civil War in Worcestershire 1642-1646; and the Scotch Invasion of 1651. Facing p222
 3. 'To the Constables and Tything men of Salwarpe....Given at our Court at Worcester, the 24th August 1651'. Noake, Worcester in Olden Times. p157
 4. Letter from the Council of State to General Blake quoted in Bund *op. cit.* p234
 5. The Army of the Earl of Essex had a train of bridge boats and 80 watermen available in the Autumn of 1642, and the pontoons were left at Gloucester on the River Severn after the focus of the campaign moved eastwards. Thirty of the boats were used to construct a bridge to enable Sir William Waller to cross the Severn at Framilode passage with 2,500 men in March 1643, and Essex used the pontoons to deceive Charles as to his intentions in September. It seems probable that the boats remained at Tewkesbury until the end of the First Civil War, and it is conceivable that any surviving pontoons helped to form Cromwell's bridge of boats at Worcester in September 1651. See Evans, D S 'The Bridge of Boats at Gloucester 1642-44' in Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research Vol. LXXI, No. 288 Winter 1993 pp232-42
- J W Willis Bund, writing in 1905, lamented the fact that 'The remains of Cromwell's bridge over the Teme were, within recent years, pulled up and sold for firewood'. *Op. cit.* p260
6. Robert Stapleton, despatch dated 3 September 1651. Quoted in Bund *ibid* p249
 7. Nicholas Lechmere, diary. Quoted in Bund *ibid* p250
 8. Robert Stapleton, despatch dated 3 September 1651. Quoted in Bund *op. cit.* p249
 9. Robert Stapleton, despatch dated 3 September 1651. Quoted in Bund *ibid.* p249
 10. 'Relation of the defeat of the King's army at Worcester, 3/13 September 1651.' Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series 1651. Edited by M A E Green, (London 1877)
 11. Robert Stapleton, despatch dated 3 September 1651. Quoted in Bund *op. cit.* p249
 12. Green *op. cit.*
 13. Green *ibid*
 14. Letter from Oliver Cromwell to Speaker Lenthall dated 4 September 1651. Quoted in Bund *op. cit.* p250
 15. Green *op. cit.*
 16. Letter from Sir Richard Berkeley to Sir Thomas Cave, dated 8 September 1651. Quoted in Bund *op. cit.* p258-59

17. Cromwell to Speaker Lenthall dated 4 September 1651. Quoted in Bund *op. cit.* p249
18. Cromwell *ibid*
19. Cromwell *ibid*
20. Sir Richard Berkeley *op. cit.*

Powick Bridge (23 September 1642)**Parish:** Powick; Rushwick**District:** Worcester; Malvern Hills**County:** Hereford and Worcester**Grid Ref:** SO 835525 (centred on Old Powick Bridge)**Historical Context**

On 22 August 1642 Charles I raised his standard at Nottingham and effectively declared war on Parliament. True, the King lacked sufficient men, munitions, and money for his purpose, but as September advanced the Royalist army slowly grew in size. Parliament had begun to raise troops in June 1642 and the Earl of Essex was appointed their Captain-General in July. By September the Parliamentary army was nearly twice the strength of its opponent and its assembly area at Northampton was far too close to Nottingham for the Royalist's comfort. Charles therefore decided to move west towards the Welsh border where he might expect to accelerate the recruiting of his army and consolidate his supplies. Essex's task was to prevent any attempt by the King to move on London and to intercept and disrupt the Royalist line of communication with Wales.

On 13 September 1642 Charles left Nottingham with the Royalist infantry and marched to Derby, while Prince Rupert with 1,000 Horse left Leicester and also moved westwards. As Essex did not respond to the movement of the Royalist forces until 19 September, Charles and Rupert had secured a head start and Essex was unable to prevent the King reaching Shrewsbury where he established his headquarters. Rupert was ordered to occupy the country between Shrewsbury and Worcester preparatory to a general Royalist advance on the latter city. Essex meanwhile was moving west via Coventry, Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon.

While the main armies struggled to make progress westwards Sir John Byron, commanding a regiment of Royalist dragoons, was assembling a convoy of plate and money donated to the King's cause by the Colleges of Oxford. Word of his endeavours had spread widely, and it was clear to Byron that with Essex's army on one flank and local Parliamentary forces gathering on the other his journey would be hazardous in the extreme. The King responded to Byron's pleas for assistance by despatching Rupert and a party of Horse towards Worcester to link up with the treasure convoy before Essex could lay his hands on it. On 16 September Byron reached Worcester and occupied the city, even though his troops were too few to defend its dilapidated walls.

Essex, with 20,000 men, was now only some 25 miles from Worcester and learning of Byron's arrival he pushed his army forward 19 miles to Pershore on 23 September. The advance guard of Essex's cavalry under Colonel Nathaniel Fiennes had, however, already dashed ahead from Alcester, and on 22 September it had deployed before the south, or Sidbury, Gate of the City. The Parliamentary force totalled about 1,000 men and it included troops of Horse and dragoons commanded by Nathaniel Fiennes, Colonel John Fiennes, Edward Wingate, and Colonel Edwin Sandys. Attached to Fiennes as a military adviser was a Scotsman, Colonel John Brown.

While Fiennes men deployed before the Sidbury Gate the Royalists slept on and it took the firing of a musket through the gate by the Parliamentarians to raise the guard. Called upon to surrender, the now roused garrison refused and Fiennes pulled his men back in some haste and confusion. Although the City and the convoy had been his for the taking Fiennes had failed miserably due to a want of enterprise and determination. All he could do now was await the arrival of Essex and attempt to ensure that Byron did not join the King at Shrewsbury. The main Parliamentary army would approach Worcester along the east bank of the River Severn, and to reach Shrewsbury Byron would cross the river and march along the west bank. Fiennes therefore deployed his

troops on the west bank at the village of Powick some two miles to the south of Worcester. Unfortunately Fiennes was not aware that Rupert had left Bewdley for Worcester early on 23 September or that he had reached St. John's on the western edge of Worcester at midday.

Location of the Skirmish

Powick Bridge spans the River Teme some 200 yards to the south of the Worcester suburb of Lower Wick which lies on the south-western edge of the City. There are two bridges that bear the name on the modern Ordnance Survey map, one given in a modern typeface and one in an antique face. The bridge with the modern typeface is an iron bridge built in 1837 which carries the Malvern Road (A449) across the Teme and into the suburb of St John's. The bridge which gave its name to the action of 23 September 1642 bears the antique typeface and stands to the west of the Malvern Road bridge. It is generally known as Powick Old Bridge and it was constructed at some time before 1447. There is no dispute as to the general location of the fighting or that Powick Old Bridge provided the crossing point over the Teme used by the Parliamentary Horse. The skirmish at Powick Bridge is known in some sources, both primary and secondary, as the Battle of Wick Field.

A brief, eyewitness description of the action at Powick Bridge is provided by Sir Richard Bulstrode who served in the Earl of Northampton's troop in the Prince of Wales' Regiment of Horse:

... my Lord of Northampton, with his Troop of Gentlemen, which were numerous, marched towards Worcester, where we met Prince Rupert with some Troops of Horse, with whom we joined and drew up in the Fields, not far from Powyk Bridge, upon the Severn, where we stood very quietly for some time, being informed that the Earl of Essex was marching after us. We had not been long in this Posture, before some Troops of Horse, commanded by Collonel Nathaniel Fiennes, who lay on the other Side Powyck Bridge, expecting to meet the Vanguard of Essex's Army, passed the Bridge, and having passed the Defiles, he drew up his Troops not far from ours, which the Prince gave him Time to do; but then the Prince charged and routed them, and sent them back over the Bridge, in great Confusion and Disorder.¹

The occupation of Powick village provided the Parliamentarians with a commanding position from which to watch Worcester and the Severn Valley. It would also enable Fiennes to move to block Byron's route to Shrewsbury once Essex appeared upon the scene. During the remaining hours of the night of 22/23 September the Parliamentarians remained mounted in Powick Hams, but at daylight Colonel Brown, who appears to have exercised actual command of the Parliamentary Horse supported by Fiennes, posted a line of dragoons along the low ridge running from Ham Hill to Powick Church. The remaining portion of the force, now tired, cold, and wet most probably withdrew into the village to recuperate. Nothing occurred until 4.00pm when news reached Fiennes that Essex was at last approaching Worcester. Fiennes ordered his Horse forward on to the meadow of Powick Hams to the south of the bridge, through which ran the road from Powick to Worcester. After the singing of a psalm the Parliamentary Horse advanced along the road to Worcester.

Rupert meanwhile had divided his force, despatching part to assist Byron with his preparations for the convoy's departure for Shrewsbury, while advancing south with the remainder to occupy Wick Field to the north of Powick Bridge. The Parliamentary Horse crossed Powick Bridge and pressed ahead through the hedge-lined confines of the Worcester road, passing 'The Chequers' public house (long since demolished), until they came to the point where the road entered the comparatively large, open spaces of Wick Field. Here the road from Powick, which was known until the end of the nineteenth century as 'Cut Throat Lane' but which was later re-named 'Swinton Lane', turned to the left after crossing Wick Field and joined the main Worcester to Bransford road just over a mile from the City. This was the route the Royalists had followed to reach Wick Field and it was in the field that they had dismounted to rest. Rupert and his senior officers chose to sit in the shade of a large thorn tree near to the spot where the road from Powick Bridge came out into the field, and it was here that the first cavalry charge of the action took place.

The Landscape Evolution

The suburbs of Worcester have spread south-westwards to cover much of the ground between St. John's and the northern bank of the Teme. Lower Wick is now largely housing estates though there is still some open ground to the east between Powick Bridge and the fish ponds. Only to the south of the bridge in Powick Hams does the land retain an agricultural character as it rises towards Powick Village. Much of the area over which fighting took place has thus been covered by modern building, and Powick Bridge now carries the road into the edge of a housing estate. Powick Mills, a complex of industrial workshops and storage units, stands adjacent to the bridge on the north bank of the Teme. The upper portion of Powick Bridge has been rebuilt in brick.

Powick Bridge: its sources and interpretation

A number of contemporary accounts of Powick Bridge are extant and the majority of the military accounts are by eyewitnesses. A measure of confusion over the precise sequence of events and inconsistencies concerning details are revealed, but most sources have at least a modicum of historical value. The fullest account on the Parliamentary side was written by a member of Nathaniell Fiennes' Troop² and it provides a detailed view of the actions of Fiennes' party of Horse and of the confusion of command which beset them. As the Parliamentarians approached Worcester divided councils were already causing dissension amongst their senior officers:

... and then all the Horse and Dragoones were commanded to march away that night towards Worcester. And about midnight, when we were some five miles of the City Collonel Brown began to advise what we should do, and at length it was oncluded, that it was to no purpose for us to go forward towards the Town (being not able to take it without Cannons) and the best service that we could do towards the surrounding of the Town before my Lord General came, was thought to be the possessing of ourselves of the Bridge over Severn at Upton, some six miles below Worcester, whereby we should be masters of both sides the River. ... Where when we were come we made no other account but that we should have quartered there that night, but we were no sooner over the bridge, but Collonel Sands who had the van marched on towards Worcester. Whereupon Captain Nathaniel Finnes riding up to Collonel Sands to know the reason why they marched on further, the answer was that Collonell Brown and himself conceived it was best to march straight on to Worcester, lest the Troops there should make an escape before we came, and that we must make haste to seize upon a bridge called Poike bridge lest the enemy should possesse themselves of it, or break it down before we came, and so hinder our passage to the Town. It was objected, that the Gloucestershire Forces were not come up to us, that Prince Rupert with a great part of the Kings Horse might be there as soon as we, and so we might make more haste than good speed. And the truth is, that most of the Officers were ill satisfied with the course we took, but we were commanded to march forward, and so we came that night to Powick which is about a mile of Worcester. And having possessed ourselves of the bridge, we sat all night on Horse back in a medow behind the bridge, which served for no other end but to soile ourselves and our Horses, and give the enemy a more certaine knowledge of our designe, and of our strength and to quicken them in sending to prince Rupert to come to their assistance, and in the meantime we did not at all advance our own designs, for troops might come in and of out of the Town, even on that side of the River that we were on, notwithstanding our being there.³

The censorious tone of *A Letter* has no doubt much to do with the need to distance the writer from any blame that might follow the reverse at Powick Bridge, but the Parliamentary conduct of affairs before Worcester does appear to have been characterised by periods of energetic endeavour followed by total confusion and alarm. After waiting south of the Teme for most of the day on the 23rd, the Parliamentary Horse was suddenly stirred into action by a messenger who brought news that Essex and his army were close to Worcester and ready

to attack. The author of *A Letter* relates the detail of the message:

... about four of the clock in the afternoon there came one from Sir William Balfour Lieutenant Generall of the Horse, to certifie us that my Lord General with his Army was neere Worcester, and that some Regiments of Horse and Foot were come up neere to the Town, but that the Cannon was not as yet come up: Hereupon Collonel Brown and Collonel Sands were instant to have us march with all speed to the Town, and hearing some Musquets go of neere the Town, would needs persuade themselves that my Lord General was playing upon the Town with his Cannon.

In this report of a messenger from Essex lies one of the problems relating to Powick Bridge. Was it a genuine message or a Royalist trick to force the Parliamentary Horse into premature action on disadvantageous terms. Certainly, William Bowen, 'Ensign to his Excellence the Earle of Essex' believed so:

The reason that our 10 troops (being but a handfull of the Cavaleers) fell on us, was, that the Cavaleers had very cunningly sent a report to those 10 troops, pretending it came from the Lord Generall, the Earle of Essex, that his Excellencie was within a mile of the other side of the towne, and would fall on presently, and wisht them to fall on likewise, which was a plot and a meere invention of the Cavaleers, for those 10 troops to fall on, whereby they with all their Forces, intended to cut of these 10 troops: His Excellencies Army being at that time(which the Cavaleers knew very well) five myles distant from worcester, and had marcht exceeding hard that day to come so neere; for had our Army beene then within a myle of the towne, we had taken all the Cavaleers.⁴

If it was a Royalist stratagem then it is unlikely that Rupert's troops would have been taken by surprise in Wick Field since they would have been expecting some Parliamentary reaction to their message. Yet that both sides were indeed taken by surprise is the central feature of many accounts of the action. Whether by a ploy or not, the Parliamentarians were stirred to violent action by the message:

... and they were so possessed with an apprehension that the Troopes which were in the Town were flying out, and that we should not come soon enough upon them, that they were impatient of any stay; And when Captaine Wingate desired that we should not make such haste, and that we should go on with a little more consideration, he was answered, that those that would follow might, those that would not might stand and looke on, After Captain Nathaniel Fiennes rode up to Collonel Sands and desired him that if they would goe on so instantly yet at least (which was the constant use) that some commanded men might be sent before us, to give us intelligence what the Enemy was, how he lay, and what he did, and this they might doe while Collonel Brown was bringing down his Dragoones, the greatest part where of were upon a Hill some two flight shot of: This motion was yeilded unto and two appointed to be drawn out of each Troope to goe up before us : But Colonel Sands made such hast, that before either the Dragoones could come to us, or the commanded men be drawn out, or some of the Troopes make an end of a Psalme which they were singing, he made over the Bridge up into the lane towards the Enemy.⁵

Powick Bridge was only eight feet wide and it was difficult for the Parliamentary Horse to proceed at a rate greater than two troopers at a time. Accordingly their formation became attenuated and as they emerged from the bridge matters did not improve. Some of the troopers at the front of the column halted to allow a party of commanded men to pass through, but then immediately followed without waiting for news of the enemy:

And when we were almost within Musket shot of them, we made a stand in that laine and called for the commanded men to goe before us, and so we let them goe by us but to not purpose at all, for we followed them so close at the heeles, that the Van and the commanded men were upon the

Enemy both together, so that we could receive no intelligence or benefit by them at all, but fell upon the Enemy with all the disadvantage to ourselves and advantage to them that could be ...⁶

If the Parliamentarians were hoping to reform once they had negotiated the bottleneck at the bridge they were sorely disappointed for they found the northern approaches more difficult than those to the south:

... for so soone as we were over Princk Bridge we went up a narrow lane, and after crossed a little close (their Dragoners playing upon us all the while) and then were to passe a Gate thorough which we could not passe above three a breast ...⁷

By this stage the Royalists had clearly recovered from any surprise they might have experienced at the sudden appearance of the Parliamentarian Horse, for their dragoons were already firing into the enemy's leading ranks.

There are differing accounts of the strength of the forces which now faced each other in Wick Field. After the reverse at Powick, Parliament was desperate to place the actions of its soldiers in the best possible light and inflating the Royalist strength was one way of accomplishing this. William Bowen for one gave an overwhelming superiority of numbers to the Royalists:

... then by the Relation of some exceeding true and remarkeable passages: which (after a tedious march) happened between 10 troops of our Horse, consisting of about 500 which went before the town a day before the Army: And the Cavaleers Troope consisting of 1800 Horse.⁸

Rupert in his despatch to the King stated that the Royalists 'met with ten troops of their horse and five of their dragoons'⁹ or about 1,000 men. This figure is supported by other Royalist correspondents¹⁰ who estimate the strength of the two sides as roughly equal at 1,000 men each. While parity was the gauge of numerical strength, the Royalists could perhaps claim a greater *élan* than their opponents and the Parliamentarians in return a superior level of arms and equipment.

Traditionally, it has always been reported that Rupert's immediate reaction to the Parliamentarian arrival in Wick Field was to order his men to charge, which they did pell mell catching the Parliamentarian Horse in complete confusion. Sir Richard Bulstrode in his *Memoirs*, however, states that Rupert gave Fiennes time in which to deploy ('he drew up his Troops not far from ours, which the Prince gave him Time to do...'). It seems clear from *A Letter* that at least some of the Parliamentarian Troops had deployed before Rupert's charge hit them, but not necessarily in their full strength:

And so soon as we were gone through the Gate we were instantly upon the enemies Horse, which having covered themselves in a little bottome, so soon as they descried our Van to have passed the Gate, they presently made all the hast they could to charge us before halfe our Troopes were come through the Gate, or that half of those that were got through could draw up their divisions: what was done by other Troopes after they came to charge whereof I my selfe was not, I can tell little but what I heard from others. But for the Troope of Captaine Nathaniell Fiennes (whereof I was) it was no sooner drawn up into a body, but one of the Enemies Troopes which I after heard to be Sir Lewes Dives his Troope seemed to advance a little before the rest, and came up directly to charge my Captaines Troope, the other Troopes of the Enemy seemed to move some toward the two Troopes that were on our right hand (which were the Troopes of Colonell Sands and Captaine Wingate) and the rest of the Troopes (whereof Prince Ruperts owne Troope, as I heard, was one) moved toward the Troopes that were on our left hand which were Captaine John Fiennes his Troope, and next to him (as I think) Captain Austines, and Serjent Major Douglas next to him, and after in what order, the rest of the Troope came up I cannot tell. But so swon as Sir Lewis Dives Troope had discharged upon us, we let them come up very neere that their Horses noses almost

touched those of our first ranke before ours gave fire, and then they gave fire and very well (to my thinking) with their Carbines, after fell in with their Swords pell mell into the midst of their Enemies, with good hope to have broken them being pretty well shattered with the first charge of their Carbines).¹¹

The Royalists had certainly seized the initiative by charging the Parliamentary Horse, and the front ranks of Colonel Sandys' Troop took the initial shock:

Colonell Sands troope fell on first, where the Colonell himselfe was dangerously wounded in three places, his Cornett slaine, his Lieutenant dangerously wounded; Sergeant Major Douglas a brave Souldier was slaine, Captaine Berry slaine, his Cornett wounded, Captaine Aston Lieutenant slaine, his Cornett slaine, his Quarter master dangerously wounded, 6 of his troopers slaine and 16 hurt. Captain Lidcotts Cornett slaine, his Quartermaster dangerously wounded, his Corporall slaine....¹²

There are conflicting accounts of what happened next and it is difficult to be precise about the degree of resistance offered by the Parliamentary Horse. The impression given by *A Letter* is that Fiennes and his men received the charge of Sir Lewis Dyve's Troop with some success, firing their carbines at close range and then falling on with their swords. Only when they realised that the Parliamentary troops on their flanks had broken did Fiennes men retreat to the bridge:

But of a suddaine we found all their Troopes on both sides of us melted away, and our reare being carried away with them : my Captaine with a few of his Troope being invironed with his Enemies yet got off with their Colours, and some four or five of his troope and recovered the Gate, and afterward the Bridge, where we hoped that those of our Troopes that were gon before would have made a stand....¹³

The Royalist charge appears to have overlapped the emergent Parliamentary line, first sweeping Sandys' Troop away and then funnelling the troops on the flanks back down the lane to Powick Bridge. William Bowen claimed that the Parliamentary Horse cut its way out of encirclement:

And for all the odds of the Cavaleers, who having encompassed our men, as it were in a halfe Moone, yet our Troops charged through their whole Body, and force their passage, onely with the losse of what is above mentioned, and so made their retreat good.¹⁴

In considerable confusion the Parliamentarians regained Powicke Bridge to find Colonel Brown and a few of his dragoons preparing to hold off the pursuit. Fiennes attempted to make his men stand and fight at the bridge but they would stop for no one:

... when we came thither we found onely Colonell Browne on foote with some halfe a dozen of his Dragoones, with whom my Captain turned about to see if hee could make any of the Horse that came after him make a stand; But they being but a few, and the rest being all gone away before, they would not stay but rid all away as the rest had done before them. Yet Colonell Browne very resolutely having got a few more of his Dragoones together made good the Bridge, and having slaine about a dozen of them that came downe to the Bridge they retreated, and never offered to come over the Bridge afterwards, that ever I could heare by which meanes Colonell Browne saved not onely many of his Dragoones, but divers also of us that came last, of whom in all likelihood had beene taken or cut off, if the Enemy had pursued us.¹⁵

Rupert does not appear to have pursued the fleeing Parliamentarians much beyond the bridge and some Parliamentary supporters claimed that the Royalists suffered severely during the action. There were even

rumours that elements of the Parliamentary Horse had fought their way into Worcester and remained there until relieved by Essex. In reality, the Parliamentarians did not pause in their flight until they met Essex's Lifeguard on the road from Upton to Pershore. Their panic then communicated itself so well to the Lifeguard that everyone galloped for the safety of the main body of the Parliamentary army:

The body of our routed party returned in great disorder to Pershore, at which place our Life Guard was appointed to quarter that night. When we were marching into Pershore we discovered horsemen riding very hard towards us, with drawn swords, and many of them without hats, for whom we understood the particulars of our loss, not without improvement by reason of the fear with which they were possessed, telling us that the enemy was hard by in pursuit of them, whereas it afterwards appeared they came not within four miles of that place. Our Life Guard, being for the most part strangers to things of this nature, were much alarmed with the report. Yet some of us, unwilling to give credit to it until we were better informed, offered ourselves to go out upon a further discovery of the matter. But our Captain (Sir Philip Stapleton) not being then with us, his Lieutenant, one Bainham, an old soldier (a generation of men much cried up at that time), drawing us into a field, where he pretended we might more advantageously charge if there should be occasion, commanded us to wheel about; but our gentlemen, not understanding the difference between wheeling about and shifting for themselves, their backs being now towards the enemy, whom they thought to be close in the rear, retired to the army in a very dishonourable manner, and the next morning rallied at the head-quarters, when we received but cold welcome from the general, as we well deserved.¹⁶

The Royalists retired into Worcester, completed their preparations for the departure of the treasure convoy and came safe to the King at Shrewsbury. Initial reports of casualties among the Parliamentary Horse ranged as high as 300-400, but as calm returned estimates of those killed were reduced to 30-40, with perhaps a further 100 wounded. The 60-80 Parliamentary prisoners taken by the Royalists were given their freedom on condition that they did not take up arms against the King again. Several of the Royalist's senior officers were wounded in the skirmish, principally because they had been the first into action. Rupert, Prince Maurice, Wilmot, Byron, Lucas and Dives all received sword cuts, but the Royalist dead were few in number.

Indication of Importance

By the standards of the Civil War the affair at Powick Bridge on 23 September 1643, lasting possibly no more than 15 minutes, involving barely 2,000 men and resulting in perhaps 150 casualties, was a skirmish rather than a battle. The first Civil War was to see many such encounters and had Powick Bridge occurred in 1643, 1644, or 1645 it would have received scant attention from contemporaries or historians. Certainly many contemporaries referred to Powick Bridge as a skirmish, as the titles of several of the letters and pamphlets written at the time bear witness. Yet Powick Bridge is written about today because it was the first action of any size of the Civil Wars, and as such, few military historians omit it from their treatment of the Wars.

In terms of the conduct of the first Civil War, Powick Bridge is seen to be important because it lent the Royalist cavalry, and Rupert in particular, a reputation for courage, dash, and professional skill. Clarendon expressed the contemporary view:

This rencontre proved if great advantage and benefit to the King, for it being the first action his horse had been brought to, and that party of the enemy being the most picked and choice men, it gave his troops great courage, and rendered the name of Prince Rupert very terrible, and exceedingly appalled the adversary, insomuch as they had not in a long time after any confidence in their horse, and their very numbers were much lessened by it. For that whole party being routed, and the chief officers of reputation either killed or taken (though the number lost upon the place was not considerable), there were very many men who never

returned to the service, and which was worse, for their own excuse, in all places talked aloud of the incredible and irresistible courage of Prince Rupert and the King's Horse.¹⁷

The results of Powick Bridge were thus psychological rather than material, and the accuracy of contemporary claims can only be weighed amongst the other uncertainties of war as they were increasingly demonstrated in the battles to come.

For a skirmish the sources available for Powick Bridge are considerable and this of course reflects contemporary interest in what was the first full action of the Civil Wars.

Powick Bridge itself still stands and is a scheduled ancient monument. Its southern approaches (particularly Powick Hams) retain, for the present, something of their agricultural character. This may well disappear in the construction of the new bypass though the bridge itself will not be touched by this development. The scene of the skirmish on the northern bank of the Teme has already been submerged in modern housing and it is difficult to trace the action on the ground.

Notes

1. Bulstrode, Sir Richard, *Memoirs and Reflections*. (1721) Bulstrode's memoirs were analysed by Sir Charles Firth in an article in *English Historical Review* vol. X 1895. Sir Charles showed that the publication consisted of genuine memoirs supplemented by additional material from Warwick and Clarendon.
2. *A Letter, Purporting the true relation of the Skirmish at Worcester*. Thomason Tracts T.T. E. 126 (39)
3. *Ibid* pp7-8
4. Bowen, William. *A Perfect and True Relation of the great and bloody Skirmish Fought before the City of Worcester, upon Friday, Septemb 23 1642....Sent in a Letter from Worcester by Mr William Bowen....dated Septemb 26*. (3 October 1642)
5. *A Letter op. cit.* p9
6. *Ibid* p9
7. *Ibid* p9
8. Bowen *op. cit.* p3
9. Despatch to the King dated 24 September 1642, reproduced in Bund, J W *The Civil War in Worcestershire 1642-1646*. (1905)
10. See the letter to Lord Wilmot from his son quoted by J W Bund p47
11. *A Letter op. cit.* pp9-10
12. Bowen *op. cit.* pp4-5
13. *A Letter op. cit.* p10
14. Bowen *op. cit.* p5

15. *A Letter op. cit.* p10
16. Ludlow, Edmund. *Memoirs* ed. C H Firth (1894)
17. Hyde, Edward, Earl of Clarendon. *The History of the Rebellion....* Vol III, pp236-7 (1826)